

Sinclair Broadcasting's decision to force their stations to air an anti-Kerry documentary days before the election is a clear example of the dangers of media consolidation. Furthermore, it is a bold step towards electioneering since there has been no attempt by Sinclair to balance their presentation by offering a documentary that airs the opposing viewpoint.

Sinclair uses the public airwaves free of charge, and is obligated by law to serve the public interest. All of the public, not just some of them. But when large companies control the airwaves, we get more of what's good for the bottom line and less free competition in the marketplace of ideas and information which is the lifeblood of any fully functioning, healthy democracy. Instead of something produced at "News Central" far away, it's more important that we see real people from our own communities and more substantive news about issues that matter.

Sinclair's actions show why we need to strengthen media ownership rules, not weaken them. They show why the license renewal process needs to involve more than a returned postcard. To close, Walter Lippman said it best, "The theory of a free press is that truth will emerge from free discussion, not that it will be presented perfectly and instantly in any one account."

Thank you.